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Response Paper 2, *In Our Time*

In Chapter VII of Ernest Hemingway’s *In Our Time*, a soldier attempts to find a religious safety net by begging God for a second chance at life. The theme of this short chapter is insincere and phony faith, specifically that of desperate soldiers. People seem to turn to God in times of despair, but forget about Him when they return to the real world and feel that they are okay without him. The soldier in Chapter VII of *In Our Time* clearly struggles under this circumstance to keep faith as he continues life without God after He has saved him.

The scene in Chapter VII primarily takes place on a battlefield where a soldier is on the verge of death, and he prays to God in desperation for assistance. In this short story, it is important to note the significance of the soldier’s cry for help. He uses phrases such as “Christ, please” and “please, please dear Jesus” with a seemingly sincere tone to show God how much he needed Him (VII). He goes so far as to say, “I believe in you and I'll tell everybody in the world that you are the only thing that matters (VII).” This is a very bold statement. He not only asks God to help him and to save him, but he is begging Him for life and essentially tells Him that he will spread his love for God if he survives. When God answers his prayers, the soldier takes it for granted. He may or may not realize how great of a favor God has just done for him, but the manner in which he begs for refuge makes it seem as though he understands what he is asking for and whom he is asking it from. Not only does he not keep his word to God, but also he hides his joy for God from a woman from whom he is seeking physical pleasure. From a religious standpoint, this is a very contradicting situation. Things finally become “cheerful and quiet” and he is able to live another day, but he does so and “never told anybody” about God (VII). This situation shows how people are willing to forget about God when they are seeking pleasure.

War is not a time of joy. It is also not a time of happiness. However, it can be a time of hope for a brighter future both within the war and for those who witness it from the outside looking in. Many times we hear of soldiers, prisoners (of war), and other people in hopelessness turning to God for help. In anxiety, they feel that there is a greater being that they can look to for safety. They need something that can make them believe that everything will be okay. Then, they are challenged to either keep growing in love and trust with God, or to turn away and give up on hope. As humans, it is very easy to get distracted by pleasures that the world brings upon. Hemingway writes about this soldier who has an insincere and phony faith to show that even those who are not religious or spiritual might believe in God or even help from a greater being.